

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 /064 W
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R 290815Z JAN 76 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5991
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 0717

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, AF
SUBJ: CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY: GENERAL GHULAM HAIDER RASULI HAS BEEN MADE
CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF AND DR. ABDULLAH OMAR TAKES OVER
AS MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH. END SUMMARY.

1. KABUL RADIO EVENING JANUARY 28 CARRIED ANNOUNCEMENTS
OF TWO IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT CHANGES IN MINISTRIES OF
NATIONAL DEFENSE AND PUBLIC HEALTH. DARI PRESS ON
FOLLOWING DAY CARRIED IDENTICAL ANNOUNCEMENTS.

2. MAJOR GENERAL GHULAM HAIDER RASULI HAS BEEN NAMED BY
PRESIDENT DAOUD AS CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF, REPLACING
LT. GENERAL ABDUL KARIM MOSTAGHNI WHO IS DESCRIBED AS
PRESENTLY "UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR ANOTHER POSITION."

3. DR. ABDULLAH OMAR HAS BEEN NAMED MINISTER OF PUBLIC
HEALTH "FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF AFFAIRS" IN THE MINISTRY,
REPLACING DR. NAZAR MOHAMMAD SEKANDAR. SEKANDAR WAS NOT,
HOWEVER, ACTUALLY MENTIONED IN THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

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4. BOTH CHANGES HAD LONG BEEN RUMORED, SO LONG RUMORED

IN FACT IN THE CASE OF SEKANDAR THAT THE STORY HAD BEGUN TO LOSE CREDIBILITY. HAIDER RASULI IS A TOUGH DAOUD LOYALIST WHO RETURNED TO MILITARY LIFE IN THE COUP OF 1973 AFTER HAVING RETIRED IN 1971 AS A LIEUTENANT COLONEL. UNTIL HIS APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF HAIDER RASULI HELD THE JOB OF CENTRAL ARMY FORCES COMMANDER, WHERE HE EARLY ON BECAME EMBROILED IN BITTER RIVALRY WITH HIS OSTENSIBLE BOSS GENERAL MOSTAGHNI. RUMORS HAVE LONG BEEN CURRENT THAT MOSTAGHNI WOULD BE OFFERED AN AMBASSADORSHIP, AND AN INFORMED SOURCE IN THE DEFENSE MINISTRY SAID TODAY, JAN. 29, THAT MOSTAGHNI WOULD BE GIVEN "A CIVILIAN KIND OF JOB."

5. REPLACEMENT OF THE AGING AND INEFFECTIVE MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH BY DR. ABDULLAH OMAR HAS ALSO BEEN LONG RUMORED. IT APPEARS THAT OMAR MIGHT ACTUALLY HAVE RETURNED TO AFGHANISTAN FROM ABROAD LAST AUTUMN TO ACCEPT THE MINISTRY, ONLY TO HAVE THE PROSPECT RECEDE. OMAR PRESENTLY IS SERVING AS A WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION OFFICIAL IN YEMEN, WORKING OUT OF WHO OFFICE IN ALEXANDRIA. ABDULLAH OMAR IS 46 YEARS OLD AND IS REPUTED TO BE A STRONG AND DECISIVE ADMINISTRATOR. IN SERVICE WITH WHO SINCE 1972, ABDULLAH OMAR WAS EARLIER DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH (1968-1971) AND PRESIDENT OF AFGHANISTAN'S PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE (1967-68). OMAR STUDIED AT KABUL UNIVERSITY (M.D. 1964) AND SUBSEQUENTLY DID GRADUATE WORK IN FRANCE. THE NEW MINISTER IS A RELATIVELY UNKNOWN QUANTITY INsofar AS ATTITUDES TOWARD U.S. ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS HERE. BUT IN TERMS OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE MINISTRY, THIS CHANGE CAN ONLY BE FOR THE BETTER.

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